

Rail Topic Group Conference Call Summary September 18th, 1997

Old Items

- (1) The OCRWM letter to FRA concerning the authority of states, tribes, and carriers was discussed; OCRWM is still awaiting FRA response.
- (2) Audrey Adamson (UETC) informed participants that the TEC/WG Planning Committee had discussed and approved TEC/WG membership for a representative from the FRA's State Rail Inspection Program. Ms. Adamson mentioned that this representative changes yearly, but that a representative would be included as a full member in the TEC/WG.
- (3) Evaluation results from the July, 1997 TEC/WG meeting in Albuquerque were briefly discussed, with the high marks given the rail panel by attendees duly noted. Ms. Adamson told the group that another panel addressing rail issues had been requested for the January, 1998 meeting. The January panel discussion is likely to cover the experiences of three rail carriers in transporting DOE and Naval spent nuclear fuel. Ms. Adamson remarked that she had already initiated discussion with representatives from Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific railroads concerning participation in the January panel, and would be contacting a representative from CSX Transportation in the near future.

Bob Fronczak (AAR) mentioned possible points of contact for CSX. Bob Light (Mescalero Apache Tribe) broached the subject of rail inspection as a possible item for a panel discussion. The group concurred that the decision had been made at the July meeting to detail rail inspection standards in a matrix comparing CVSA and FRA inspection standards (see further discussion below).

New Items - Matrix 2

The agenda item entitled "Matrix 2: Enhanced CVSA Truck Standards v. FRA's Motive, Power, and Equipment Inspection Report" was discussed first. Mr. Light returned to the issue of rail inspection and suggested that inspection should occur only at the starting and ending points of the shipment. Ms. Adamson suggested that the matrix would address this type of question, as well as whether or not rail shipments would require the type of universal and extensive standards that the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance has developed for highway shipments. Mr. Fronczak inquired on behalf of the group as to the most effective method of presenting the vast array of information contained in the CVSA and FRA inspection standards. Ms. Adamson suggested and the group agreed that the best approach, given the scope and goal of the project, would be to include only the most broad categories covered by both sets of standards. One participant noted, and the group agreed, that if the TEC/WG were to request greater detail than that presented in this matrix, DOE would probably have to allocate additional time and funding to an outside (preferably non-governmental) actor to compile such a document. Another factor in favor of focusing the matrix on broad categories. Mr. Fronczak pointed out another strength of this type of matrix, namely that it would provide a cross-comparison of appropriate documents and reference materials applicable to both the CVSA and FRA standards. This would allow someone in a decision-making capacity to know if they had all the available information.

Markus Popa (DOE-OCRWM) noted that several participants at the July TEC/WG meeting had requested this type of matrix as a way of demonstrating the "special" character both of spent nuclear fuel shipments and of the standards used in transporting these shipments. Bob Centracco (FRA) mentioned that FRA has completed a document detailing the inspection procedures used for spent fuel shipments, and suggested that perhaps it could serve such a purpose. The group generally agreed, however, that the matrix would add more weight to the idea that something "special" or "extra" is in place for inspecting spent fuel shipments, particularly in the case of rail shipments, which are often the subject of additional scrutiny. Mr. Fronczak suggested, and the group agreed, that the task of identifying the appropriate topics for inclusion into this type of matrix should fall on those with more extensive experience in rail issues. Mr. Fronczak mentioned himself and Mr. Kevin Blackwell (FRA); the group later assigned Bob Centracco (FRA), Mike Calhoun (FRA), Markus Popa (OCRWM), Phil Marbut (CPRail) and Audrey Adamson (UETC) to be the principal actors in drafting Matrix 2. This sub-group agreed that it could coordinate efforts by the date of the next conference call and present a preliminary set of findings.

A copy of the enhanced CVSA standards will be obtained from Jim Daust (CVSA) and provided to all assigned to Matrix 2.

New Items - Matrix 1

The next topic of discussion was the agenda item "Matrix 1: Rail Laws and Regulations and their Applicability to States, Tribes, and Carriers." It was immediately pointed out by Mr. Popa and others that the action item from the July meeting specified that this matrix should also include highway laws and regulations. Ms. Adamson concurred with this observation and stressed that the matrix will also include a comparison of the applicability of highway laws and regulations. Participants stressed that this matrix should also consider broad categories, and that its value to the TEC/WG membership would be in its detailing of the similarities in highway and rail laws and regulations and their applicability to various jurisdictions. Although Kevin Blackwell was listed on the agenda as a possible lead, it was decided that his contribution to Matrix 2 should preclude his leading Matrix 1. Mike Butler (UETC) will instead compile Matrix 1, with assistance on its various components to come from Kevin Blackwell (FRA), Bill Sherman (NE HLRW Task Force), Bob Light (Mescalero Apache Tribe), Bob Holden (NCAI), William Naughton (ComEd), and Jim Daust (CVSA).